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Extent of Principals' Utilization of Committee System in the Administration of Secondary Schools

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Abstract

The study investigated the extent of principals' utilization of committee system in the administration of secondary schools. Prevalence of examination malpractices, irregular sporting activities, inadequate motivation of staff, lateness and absenteeism among staff and students prompted this study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design using questionnaire administered to 280 respondents. Data was analyzed using mean and standard deviation and t-test was used for testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study found among others that there was low extent of principals' utilization of disciplinary committee in the administration of secondary schools. It also found that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of more-experienced and less-experienced principals on their utilization of sports committee in the administration of secondary schools. Based on the findings, conclusion and recommendations were made.

Keywords: Principal, school administration, committee system, job experience.

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The economic development of any country to some extent is depended upon the existence of functional education system that facilitates the acquisition of knowledge, skills and expertise needed for the performance of productive tasks or manipulation of the available resources. The mandate to ensure functional secondary education is vested on the principal who is the chief executive or administrator of the school. Principal is a person appointed by the appropriate authority to pilot the day-to-day affairs of the school. In the view of Ezeugbor & Emere (2017), principal is a person responsible for administrative practices of the school using the resources at his disposal in such a way that the school's objectives are achieved. It is core duty of the principal to ensure proper administration of school through coordination of personnel efforts. School administration is the application of stipulated policies, procedures and principles in coordinating the available human, material and financial resources towards the attainment of set goals and objectives of the school.

The principal is entrusted with numerous responsibilities such as planning, coordinating, and managing of students, staff, facilities and school funds among others. These numerous administrative tasks call for unitization of committee as a means of delegating responsibilities and authority to competent members of staff in the school. Ogbomida, Obano & Emmanuel (2013) stressed that school administration is decentralized in a committee, thereby encouraging individual and collection participation. Committee is a body constituted to investigate, report, recommend or take action on a specific matter. This body is made up of few people selected from larger group. In the view of Hagar (2018) committee is a group of people appointed or chosen to perform a function or do a particular job on behalf of a large group. Ezeigbo (2016) defined committee as a subsystem of a system, an organization of people with delegated authority to advice, make decisions or recommendations towards the achievement of the goals of the organization. Furthermore, Ezeigbo asserted that committee is set up to look into greater details, issues and problems associated with each sub-unit, that are relevant to the realization of the institution set goals and objectives. Committee is usually made up members of staff delegated with responsibilities and commensurate authority to execute the tasks. Hagar (2018) stressed that activities of members of a committee involve attending meetings having studied the agenda and relevant documents for the meetings ahead of time, being active and participatory in the course of the meetings and acquainting themselves with the operations of the committee, its terms of reference, procedures, conventions and schedule of meetings.

Committee System

The essence of committee system is to promote participatory decision making, enhance team-building, foster mutual healthy interpersonal relationship, relieve school administrators of workload, reduce rumor mongering and enhance accountability. It equally fosters a sense of belonging and motivates individuals' total commitment to the aspirations and goals of the organization (Ogbomida, Obano & Emmanuel, 2013). The utilization of committee system promote communication and acceptance of decision reached in the school. Utilization is the systematic and judicious use of a given phenomenon, resources or strategy to achieve set objectives in an effective manner. Committee system provides opportunity for obtaining and sharing of necessary information among staff and students, and members of the committee who participate actively in making decisions feel a sense of belongingness necessary to implement the decisions (Ogumbameru cited in Alabi, Mustapha & Abdulkareem, 2012). In the same vein, Ezeigbo (2016) pointed out that committee system is intended to enhance managerial

accountability and to maintain the democratic procedures for representation of views. In the view of Ogbogu (2013), committee in educational institutions provides effective advisory services to the management and also improves the decision making process. The existing committees in secondary schools include; disciplinary committee, school plant maintenance committee, sport committee, staff welfare committee and examination committee among others. Similar to this, Alabi, Mustapha & Abdulkareem (2012) reported that there is existence of disciplinary committee, staff welfare committee, instructional supervision committee and school maintenance committee in secondary schools.

Disciplinary Committee

Maintenance of discipline is imperative for creating a favourable learning environment. Nnebedum & Akinfolarin (2018) defined discipline as the act of behaving in accordance with values, beliefs, rules and the code of conduct of society or the school. Disciplinary committee is a body constituted for planning and taking necessary actions to ensure conformity with the established standards, rules and regulations governing an institution. The committee is to help personnel develop self-control, desirable character, self-respect and respects for others within the school. Disciplinary committee has many responsibilities such as collaborating with administrator in formulating the school code of conduct, liaising with parents in strengthening students' discipline, referring erring students to school counselor for advice and follow-up, investigating disciplinary acts and making recommendation where necessary. Arguing in the same line, Alabi (2009) stressed that the functions of disciplinary committee include: promoting and encouraging good behaviours among the teachers and students, setting up some school rules and regulations, liaising with the school and law enforcement agents in case of difficult students, administering punishment commensurate with offence committed, assisting the personnel conformity with school rules and regulations among others. Using disciplinary committee to promote discipline must continually be practiced, if personnel are to work harmoniously for the achievement of common purpose (Tallam, Tikoko, Jackline & Daniel, 2015). Bullying of junior students, lateness and absenteeism among students and staff, leaving of school before the closing time among personnel, students fight and examination malpractices in secondary schools seem to indicate deficiencies in disciplinary committee functions in maintenance of discipline in the State.

Sports Committee

Sports are the activities that students engage in beside academics in the school to develop skills and talents (Kirul, Kipkoech & Simotwo, 2017). Continuing this, Kirul et al pointed out that these activities include ball games, track events and field events that students engage in to showcase their creativity and talents. Sports help digress from curricular programmes monotony and reduce boredom in school. To facilitate sports administration in secondary schools, sports committee is set up. Sports committee as the name implies is set up for planning, organizing, controlling and promoting sporting activities in the school. The need for providing opportunity for students to socialize with peer and improve physical fitness necessitates the setting up of sport committee. The sport committee ensures that students and staff participate in sporting activities for their physical well-being. Sport competitions are rarely organized in secondary schools to enhance physical fitness and mental alertness of students.

Staff Welfare Committee

Staff welfare is paramount to developing, maintaining and preserving the productivity of personnel in school. In the same vein, Waititu, Kihara & Senaji (2017) pointed out that staff welfare increase the productivity of organization and promote motivation, healthy organization relations and thereby maintaining peace in the workplace. Staff welfare committee is constituted to plan and organize programmes that are geared towards meeting the physical, social and psychologically well-being of members of staff in the school. The rationale for staff welfare committee is to organize orientation and co-curricular activities for staff, arrange training programme for staff to exchange ideas and up-date their skills and knowledge, award outstanding staff and ensure regular meeting with staff to discuss on-the-job problems affecting them among others.

More experienced and less experienced school principals have significant roles to play in fostering school administration. Principals' job experience over years could help them acquire skills, expertise and knowledge in managing the school through committee system. Asako & Okwo (2015) observed that the performance of principals in the task areas of management of secondary schools is influenced by their working experience. This corroborates Adu, Akinloye & Olaoye (2017) who reported that job experience is significant and reliable predictors of managerial efficiency. On the contrary, some scholars have reported that there was no significant difference between administrative and leadership style of experienced and less experienced principals (Muhammad, Saeed & Muhammad, 2013; Nakpodia, 2009). This makes it very imperative to investigate it as a moderating variable in this study. In this study, principals with less than seven years of job experience was considered as less-experienced principals, while those with above seven years of job experience was considered as more experienced principals.

Statement of the Problem

The use of committee system in the administration of school is very imperative in team-building and healthy interpersonal relationship as well as staff involvement in decision making process for the attainment of school goals and objectives. This gives staff a sense of belonging which motivate them in performing their duties. Sport competitions are rarely organized in secondary schools. It is mostly organized during school inter-house sports. Bullying of junior students, lateness and absenteeism among students and staff, leaving of school before the closing time among personnel, students fight and examination malpractices in secondary schools seem to indicate deficiencies in the utilization of committee in the administration of school. Therefore, the researcher doubt whether principals utilize committee system in the administration of secondary schools. Several studies on utilization of committee were all conducted in different areas and none was in secondary schools in the area of the present study. Also, none of the empirical studies were directly linked to administration of secondary schools. This shows that much research efforts have not been given to the extent of principals' utilization of committee system in the administration of secondary schools especially in the area of study. Thus, it appears that an obvious gap in knowledge is still persisting in this area. This study bridged the gap as it investigated the extent of principals' utilization of committee system in the administration of secondary schools.

Different groups and individuals will benefit from the findings of this study. The beneficiaries will include; principals, Ministry of Education, educational policy makers and future researchers.

The findings of the study will be useful to principals. It will be a very useful guide to them for purposes of reviewing and modifying their utilization of committee system as the case may be. Through this, principals will be enlightened and also be motivated to improve the use of committee which will in turn result to administrative effectiveness. It is hoped that Ministry of Education will benefit from the results of this study. It will enable them know the extent of principals utilization of committee system and then device ways of improving on it. It will also enable them realize areas committee system are utilized and under-utilized; this will guide them in organizing workshops, seminars or conferences to enlighten principals and also equip them with relevant skills in participative decision making. Educational policy makers will find the results of the study very useful. It will inform and sensitize them on principals' utilization of committee system. This will serve as guide in formulating policies to foster principals' utilization of committee system. The findings of this study will be useful to future researchers. It will serve as a pool of resource materials for future researchers who may wish to carry out studies on utilization of committee system. With these, future researchers will be offered a spring board for take-off in their research endeavours.

Theoretical Underpinning

This section looks at theory that gives solid foundation to this study. This theory is the Human Relations Theory. The earliest proponent to human relations theory was Mary Parker Follet in 1924, while Elton Mayo in 1927 gave an empirical support to it. This theory hinges on the principle that an organization is seen as a cooperative system where the role of the executive is to maintain the dynamic equilibrium between the needs of the organization and the needs of the employees. Human relations theory advocates that management should exercise "power with" as opposed to "power over". The theorists' lay emphasis on the human side of the enterprise, where workers are not seen as mere economic beings and part of the organization's machine, but are seen as individuals with unique characteristics, aimed at developing the organization. The theorists lay strong emphasis on workers motivation, effective communication, specialization and participation. Follet (1924) posits that it would be unprofitable for super-ordinates to give orders to their subordinates without regard to the feelings of the subordinates. Human Relations theorists asserted that organizations effectiveness and efficiency depend upon the quality of relationship among staff working in an organization. Human relations theory is the base of the work because it lays on participatory decision making and use of committee system. The theory provides a framework that enables principals give cognizance to collective decision making through constituting committee in schools. This process gives subordinates a sense of belonging in the implementation of school programmes. Involving staff in decision making as well as incorporating them in several committees encourage and motivates them toward higher performance in the discharge of their duties. The study therefore investigates the extent of principals' utilization of committee system in the administration of secondary schools. Based on the literature and theory reviewed, the study formulates the following key research questions and hypotheses to guide the study;

- What is the extent of principals' utilization of disciplinary committee in the administration of secondary schools?
- What is the extent of principals' utilization of sports committee in the administration of secondary schools?

- What is the extent of principals' utilization of staff welfare committee in the administration of secondary schools?

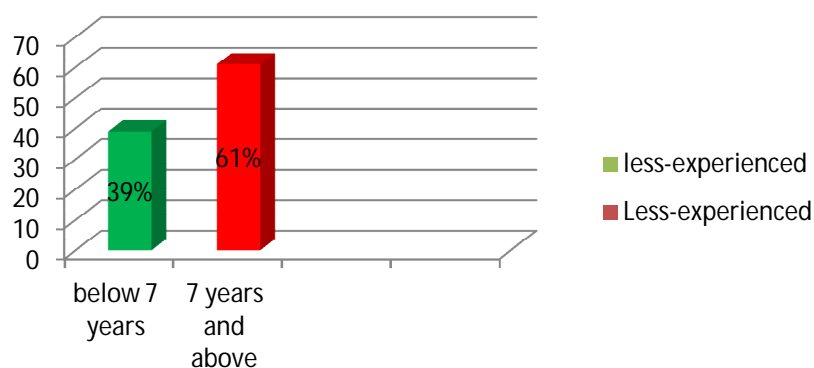
The following hypotheses were also tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of more-experienced and less-experienced principals on their utilization of disciplinary committee in the administration of secondary schools.
- There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of more-experienced and less-experienced principals on their extent of principals' utilization of sports committee in the administration of secondary schools.
- There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of more-experienced and less-experienced principals on their extent of principals' utilization of staff welfare committee in the administration of secondary schools.

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. According to Nworgu (2015), descriptive survey is the design which aims at collecting data on, and describing in a systematic manner the characteristic features or facts about a given population. The descriptive survey design fits into this study because the researchers collected data from the given population of the study to describe in a systematic manner the extent of principals' utilization of committee system in the administration of secondary schools. The study was carried out in Ondo State, Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of 559 principals in State government owned secondary schools in Ondo State. 235 respondents which are 42% of the population of the study are male, while 324 respondents which are 58% of the population of the study are female. 145 respondents which are 26% of the population of the study are in the age brackets of 40-45; 198 respondents which are 35% of the population of the study are in the age brackets of 46-50, and 216 respondents which are 26% of the population of the study are in the age brackets of 51 and above. The demographic data of principals' years of job experience are presented on the Table below.

Figure 1: Years of Job Experience of the Respondents



Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 280 principals for the study. The instrument titled “Principals Utilization of Committee System Questionnaire (PUCSQ)” was used for data collection. PUCSQ contains 27 items structured on four-point rating scale of Very High Extent (VHE), High Extent (HE), Low Extent (LE) and Very Low Extent (VLE) weighted at 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The validation of the instrument was determined by two experts in Educational management and an expert in measurement and evaluation. The suggestions of the experts were reflected on the final copy of the instrument. To ascertain the reliability of PUCSQ, 20 copies of the instrument were administered to 20 secondary school selected principals in Ekiti State. The choice of Ekiti State was because, principals in Ondo and Ekiti States share similar characteristics in school administration. Data obtained was analyzed using Cronbach alpha and it yielded the reliability co-efficient of 0.72, 0.68 and 0.64 for clusters I, II and III respectively and the overall coefficient of the entire instrument was 0.68. This is in line with Nworgu (2015) who recommended that a co-efficient value of 0.60 and above is adequate for any research work. Copies of the questionnaire were administered by the researchers together with eight research assistants who are secondary school teachers in Ondo State. Out of 280 copies of questionnaire distributed, 273 were duly filled and retrieved indicating 98% return rate. Data was analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and t-test for testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. In answering the research questions, mean rating that fall between: 4.00-3.50, 3.49-2.50, 2.49-1.50, and 1.49-below were taken to indicate VHE, HE, LE and VLE respectively. Standard deviation was used to ascertain the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents mean ratings. In testing the null hypotheses, if t-calculated is equal to or greater than t-critical at 0.05 level of significance and the degree of freedom, the null hypothesis was rejected and the difference taken to be statistically significant, but if otherwise, the null hypotheses was not rejected and the difference taken to be statistically not significant.

Results

Extent of principals’ utilization of disciplinary committee in the administration of secondary schools

Table 1

Scores of more-experienced and less-experienced principals on extent of utilization of discipline committee in school administration

S/ N	Items	More-experienced Principals (N =169)			Less-experienced Principals (N = 104)		
		Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Issuing query to erring staff	2.46	0.91	Low Extent	2.35	1.02	Low Extent
2	Investigating unpleasant matters	2.54	1.12	High Extent	2.50	0.91	High Extent
3	Suspending of misbehaved students	2.41	1.19	Low Extent	2.42	1.07	Low Extent

4	Facilitating the transferring of erring staff	2.36	1.05	Low Extent	2.45	0.81	Low Extent
5	Providing counselling service to erring students	2.58	1.16	High Extent	2.61	1.11	High Extent
6	Inviting erring staff for discussion	2.53	1.20	High Extent	2.55	0.71	High Extent
7	Inviting parents of misbehaved students for discussion	2.32	0.99	Low Extent	2.27	1.19	Low Extent
8	Issuing of letter of warning misbehaved staff	2.50	1.31	High Extent	2.47	1.23	Low Extent
9	Using of verbal reprimand against erring staff	2.36	1.25	Low Extent	2.38	1.17	Low Extent
10	Expulsion of erring students	2.38	1.11	Low Extent	2.43	1.12	Low Extent
11	Assigning portion of grasses to misbehaved students to cut	2.29	1.09	Low Extent	2.18	1.14	Low Extent
Means of Means		2.43	1.13	Low Extent	2.42	1.04	Low Extent

The findings from data analysis presented on Table 1 revealed that both more-experienced and less-experienced principals revealed low extent of their utilization of disciplinary committee in the administration of secondary schools. The pooled standard deviation scores for more-experienced and less-experienced secondary school principals indicate convergence of their responses implying that their responses are homogenous.

The extent of principals' utilization of sport committee in the administration of secondary schools

Table 2

Scores of more-experienced and less-experienced principals on their extent of utilization of sports committee in school administration

S/ N	Items	More-experienced Principals (N = 169)			Less-experienced Principals (N = 104)		
		Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Decision
12	Organizing inter-school football matches	2.58	1.05	High Extent	2.54	1.21	High Extent
13	Planning the school inter-house sports	2.71	1.13	High Extent	2.68	1.09	High Extent
14	Awarding of outstanding students in various sporting activities	2.63	1.17	High Extent	2.70	1.15	High Extent
15	Organising inter-class basket ball matches in school	2.57	1.16	High Extent	2.50	1.22	High Extent
16	Provision of sporting facilities in the school	2.43	1.02	Low Extent	2.40	1.26	Low Extent
17	Inviting professionals to coach students in various sporting activities	2.56	1.18	High Extent	2.52	1.13	High Extent
18	Organising table-tennis competition in the school	2.48	1.10	Low Extent	2.32	1.17	Low Extent
19	Organising track events in the school	2.62	1.15	High Extent	2.65	1.21	High Extent
20	Organising volley ball competition in the school	2.36	1.20	Low Extent	2.41	1.06	Low Extent
Means of Means		2.55	1.13	High Extent	2.52	1.17	High Extent

Findings from data analysis presented on Table 2 shows both more-experienced and less-experienced principals indicated that there was high extent of their utilization of sport committee in the administration of secondary schools. The pooled standard deviation scores for more-experienced and less-experienced secondary school principals respectively indicate that their mean ratings were little clustered and this implies that there is just little variation from their responses.

The extent of principals' utilization of staff welfare committee in the administration of secondary schools**Table 3**

Scores of more-experienced and less-experienced principals on their extent of utilization of staff welfare committee in school administration

S/ N	Items	More-experienced Principals (N =169)			Less-experienced Principals (N =104)		
		Mean	SD	Remark	Mean	SD	Decision
21	Organising orientation programmes for members of staff	2.58	1.14	High Extent	2.55	1.22	High Extent
22	Giving end-of-year bonus to members of staff	2.42	1.03	Low Extent	2.35	1.17	Low Extent
23	Organsing regular meeting for members of staff to air their views on issues affecting them	2.50	1.18	High Extent	5.53	1.16	High Extent
24	Arranging training programmes for staff	2.24	1.09	Low Extent	2.28	1.02	Low Extent
25	Awarding outstanding staff in school	2.34	1.17	Low Extent	2.36	1.00	Low Extent
26	Equipping staff offices	2.21	1.13	Low Extent	2.19	1.21	Low Extent
27	Recommending staff for promotion as at when due	2.37	1.27	Low Extent	2.31	1.23	Low Extent
Means of Means		2.38	1.14	Low Extent	2.37	1.13	Low Extent

Table 3 found that both more-experienced and less-experienced principals indicated that there was low extent of principals' utilization of staff welfare committee in the administration of secondary schools. The pooled standard deviation scores for more-experienced and less-experienced principals respectively indicate convergence of their responses and thus their responses were homogenous.

Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of more-experienced and less-experienced principals on their utilization of disciplinary committee in the administration of secondary schools.

Table 4

T-test for more-experienced and less-experienced principals mean ratings on their utilization of disciplinary committee in school administration

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-cal.	t-crit.	df	α	Decision
More-experienced	169	2.31	1.15	-0.53	1.96	271	0.05	Not Significant
Less-experienced	104	2.40	1.17					

The result of data analysis as presented on Table 4 shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of more-experienced and less-experienced principals on their utilization of disciplinary committee in the administration of secondary schools.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of more-experienced and less-experienced principals on their utilization of sports committee in the administration of secondary schools.

Table 5

T-test for more-experienced and less-experienced principals mean ratings of their utilization of sports committee in school administration

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-cal.	t-crit.	df	α	Decision
More-experienced	169	2.31	1.15	-0.53	1.96	271	0.05	Not Significant
Less-experienced	104	2.40	1.17					

Data presented on Table 5 shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of more-experienced and less-experienced principals on their utilization of sports committee in the administration of secondary schools.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of more-experienced and less-experienced principals on their utilization of staff welfare committee in the administration of secondary schools.

Table 6

T-test for more-experienced and less-experienced principals mean ratings of their utilization of staff welfare committee in school administration

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-cal.	t-crit.	df	α	Decision
More-experienced	169	2.31	1.15	-0.53	1.96	271	0.05	Not Significant
Less-experienced	104	2.40	1.17					

The result of data analysis as presented on Table 6 shows that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of more-experienced and less-experienced principals on their utilization of staff welfare committee in the administration of secondary schools.

Discussion

The finding of this study revealed that there was low extent of principals' utilization of disciplinary committee in the administration of secondary schools. This is in line with the finding of Tallam, Tikoko, Jackline & Daniel (2015) who reported that most schools have disciplinary committee but they are not effective. This result is not surprising due to deviant behaviours exhibited by secondary school students. The low utilization of disciplinary committee may account to lateness, absenteeism, examination malpractices and other forms of misconduct among secondary school students. It was also found out there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of more-experienced and less-experienced principals on their utilization of disciplinary committee in the administration of secondary schools. This contradicts the findings of Adu, Akinloye & Olaoye (2017) who reported that job experience is significant and reliable predictors of managerial efficiency. The contradiction might be as a result of difference in geographical location.

This study revealed that the extent of principals' utilization of sport committee in the administration of secondary schools was high. This is in agreement with the finding of Ezeigbo (2016) who reported that committee system contributes to administrative decision-making through making useful suggestions, bringing broad range of opinions and experience to bear on problems relating to sports and other issues. It was also revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of more-experienced and less-experienced principals on their utilization of sports committee in the administration of secondary schools. This is in disagreement with the finding of Asako & Okwo (2015) who reported that the performance of principals in the task areas of management of secondary schools is influenced by their working experience.

The study also found that there was low extent of principals' utilization of staff welfare committee in the administration of secondary schools. Low utilization of staff welfare committee could be responsible for teachers' negative attitude to work. Some secondary school teachers come late to school and leave school before the closing hour. Some do minor business in school and this may be attributed to neglect of their welfare. It was also indicated that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of more-experienced and less-experienced principals on their utilization of staff welfare committee in the administration of secondary schools. This corroborates the findings of Muhammad, Saeed & Muhammad (2013); Nakpodia (2009) who reported that there was no significant difference between administrative and leadership style of experienced and less experienced principals.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that there was low extent of utilization of committee system with exception of sport committee in the administration of secondary schools. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of more-experienced and less-experienced principals on their utilization of committee system in the administration of secondary schools. The job of the principals requires assist from members of staff as they cannot perform all the school

administrative tasks alone and use of committee system enhance delegation of duties and participatory management. Principals' utilization of committee system cast aside autocratic decision making process and put the school at the position of enjoying huge benefits entrenched in participatory decision making which has long become one of vogues in attaining school goals. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that educational policy makers should prepare a handbook containing the list of mandatory committees to be constituted in school, means of composition of the committee, the terms of references, functions and procedures for operation. It was also recommended by the researcher that Government should sponsor principals to workshops, seminars and conferences to enable them up-date their knowledge and skills and also to keep-abreast with recent findings in utilization of committee system in school administration.

Limitations of the Study

The use of only questionnaire for data collection was a limitation in this study. The use of other data collection method such as interview may have yielded different results. Furthermore, the study was conducted in only public secondary schools; thus, it might not be generalized to private secondary school principals. However, this does not invalidate the study. Despite these limitations, this study is deemed to have achieved its purpose.

Implication for Future Research

The implication of the limitations for future research is that a replica of the study could be carried out on a wider scope to involve private secondary schools. Mixed research design which entails the use of questionnaire and interview for data collection should be employed to carry out similar study.

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